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ABSTRACT

This packet of materials for the adult literacy volunteer contains a booklet of information and accompanying reading selections meant to help a tutor get started with a new learner. The booklet covers these topics: initial assessment of learners with sample student interview form; informal assessment with assessment questions; observing the student reading; descriptions of the stages of learning; and assessing learners at stages one, two, and three. An appendix addresses determining readability levels. A small packet of reading passages to be used to assess student reading is provided. The final component of this packet of materials is a series of aids for the tutor that include the following: suggestions for assessing learning levels; questions to elicit student background information; suggestions for getting to know the learner; the "look, cover, write, check" approach to learning words; steps in assisted reading; steps to spelling; steps in the language experience approach; and steps in language experience with stage two learners. (YLB)

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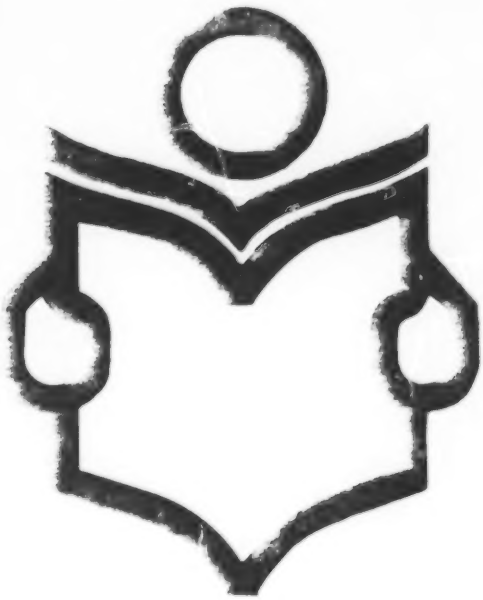

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Adult Literacy
Volunteer Tutor Pack

Manitoba Education and Training
Literacy Office

1200 Portage Avenue
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R3G 0T5

1991

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LET'S GET STARTED

An initial assessment pack for adult literacy programs

Manitoba
Education
and Training
Manitoba
Literacy Office

PREFACE

This booklet of information and the accompanying reading selections are meant to help a tutor get started with a new learner. This pack does not include teaching approaches or suggestions. Teachers and tutors should refer to Journeyworkers and the Adult Literacy Tutor Pack for teaching approaches and suggestions.

Tutors wishing further advice or information about teaching methods and materials should contact:

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INITIAL ASSESSMENT OF LEARNERS

Interviewing

When a student steps across the doors of your program, you will obviously need to find out something about him/her. You will need to get some educational background (e.g. how much schooling the student had), some language background, some information about interest and goals, and some literacy information, (e.g. what things can s/he read and write.)

The interview process is not meant to be formal or intimidating for the learner. Therefore, you may first want to make learners feel at ease by informally discussing the program with them. You can discuss learning possibilities, other students you have tutored, or the kinds of learners already involved in the program. In some programs, learners are able to observe the literacy group or tutors at work. In this way they are not immediately committed to joining the program.

Once the learner decide to join the literacy program, then some background information needs to be collected.

The Student Interview Form is meant to help in the enrolling process. However, individual programs should also feel free to develop their own forms and determine the kind of enrollment information most useful for both you and the learner.

It is recommended that the interview be an oral interview. **Do not ask the learner to fill out the application form.** The interviewer should fill it out, telling the learner what is being written on the form, and explaining that this is information that will help in planning the learning program. The interviewer should make sure the learner understands the questions by providing explanations or examples needed.

STUDENT INTERVIEW FORM

Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

Tel No.: _____

Reason for coming to program (specific goals):

Educational background:

School experience:

Educational experience since leaving school:

Why does student feel s/he did not learn to [read, write, spell,etc.] as well as s/he wanted?

When is student available for instruction?

Interests/hobbies/vocation:

Apparent learning level:

Reading:

Writing:

Spelling:

• WHERE SHOULD I START WITH THE LEARNER?

Informal Assessment

Unless the student is preparing for a further education experience, it is not recommended that standardized tests be administered upon entering the program. You can get quite a lot of information from students just by talking with them. If the stages of the learning levels are not immediately apparent, we do the following:

We informally ask him/her to read something aloud

We ask him write a short paragraph, or spell a short dictation.

In this manner we can determine general reading and writing needs and/or levels.

Assessment Questions

1) What kinds of things can you comfortably read?

- Can you read street signs?
- Can you read headlines on the newspapers?
- Can you read books?
- Can you read the TV guide?
- Can you read labels on cans, boxes, etc.

2) What kinds of things would you have difficulty in writing?

- Application forms
- Letters
- Notes to school/messages
- Reports,

3) Do you feel you need help in spelling? Do you think your difficulties in writing stem from not knowing how to spell?

[If the student is a second language learner]

4) Can you read and/or write in your mother tongue?

What things can you read and write in your mother tongue?

Observing the Student Reading

You can offer the learner a range of reading materials from your own collection. It is recommended that the learner be allowed to choose what s/he will find comfortable.

I small package of reading passages is included in this kit. however, teachers should not feel obligated to use only this material. After time, it may be useful to include: newspaper articles, literacy reading books, magazine articles, as well as the enclosed passages. [See Appendix A for information about readability levels.] .

Each reading passage includes information about the probable levels. Students should be encouraged to read aloud and to guess at the words they do not know. In this way their anxiety about making mistakes can be somewhat relieved. In general, most learners can read better than the artificial conditions of an interview session would indicate.

Things to observe when the student reads:

1) How well does the learner make use of the context, pictures, etc. in order to make guesses at unfamiliar words?

2) Does the learner have good phonetic skills? Can s/he sound out unfamiliar words? Can s/he make individual sounds but has difficulty blending them?

3) Does learner read word for word or is s/he able to read in phrases?

4) Is learner willing/able to guess at words or does s/he feel so unconfident that s/he can't guess?

5) How well does learner recall what is read? Did s/he understand the passage? Did he/she read so slowly that comprehension was lost?

Descriptions of the Stages of Learning

Stage One Learners:

If the learner says s/he cannot read at all, can barely sign his /her name, would have difficulty with simple reading or writing tasks, then this learner is most likely a Stage One Learner. (See Assessing a Stage One Learner for more information)

Introductory work will focus on: langauge experience stories, introduction of the alphabet and the notions of print, word recognition activities, photo stories, listening to stories on tape, listening to others read, doing assisted reading with a tutor or teacher.

Stage Two Learners:

If the learner can read some headlines, can write simple sentences (even if these have spelling errors in them), can read basic literacy text (See examples in Assessing the Stage Two Learner) then the learner should be working on the following:

Developing writing skills, inventing spelling for the purposes of writing, learning spelling words from their writing, practicing silent reading, doing assisted reading of more difficult texts with other tutors or teachers, etc.

Stage Three Learners:

This learners are people getting ready for college, further training or GED. For the most part, these learners will need the most guidance in: developing a variety of writing skills (e.g. essay writing, proofreading, re-drafting and re-writing, styles of writing) , individualized spelling for their own particular needs, reading comprehension, vocabulary development and advanced reading assignments.

Assessing the Stage One Learner

READING

This pack includes five sheets (indicated with an A in the upper right-hand corner) to use with learners who appear to be at Stage One.

Introducing the Reading Sheets

The tutor/teacher should say the following to the learner:

> "I am going to ask you to look at some pictures and words. This is to see what kinds of things about reading and writing you already know, so that we can figure out more about your learning. As you look at the pictures and words I would like you to guess at what you think the words say. I will probably also ask you some questions as we go along."

Observing the Learner Reading

You might use the cards in the following ways::

To determine how well the learner can predict words in context
Show the learner each card and ask him/her to guess at what the words on the pages say. Encourage learners to use the pictures in order to make logical guesses. If the learner makes a guess which does not seem to make sense to the tutor, then the tutor should ask the learner, "What made you guess that?" The learner may have a good reason for guessing as s/he did.

To determine how well the learner can discriminate similar letters and words
On some cards words are repeated. Ask the learner to match words on each page. Or you can say, "How many times does the word 'bingo' appear on this page?"

To determine what letters of the alphabet the learner recognizes and can identify
Select one of the cards. Ask the learner to name the letters s/he sees on the page. Make a note of this information on a separate page.

WRITING AND SPELLING

Learners at this Stage will have very little fluency in writing. They may be able to do simple writing tasks such as their names or addresses. They may be able to copy writing and often know the alphabet from memory.

Assessing the Stage Two Learner

If you suspect your learner is at Stage Two, you should use the cards indicated with a B in the upper-right hand corner.

READING

Introducing the Reading Cards

The tutor/teacher should say to the learner:

> "In order to find out what kinds of reading materials would suit you, I am going to ask you to read out loud from one of these cards. Choose whichever one you wish."

Show the four cards to the learner. Read the title at the top of each for the learner. Ask the learner to choose one. Then say,

> "I would like you to read this out loud. Take as much time as you need. If you don't recognize any of the words, guess at them as best you can."

Observing the Learner Reading

Do not interrupt the learner while s/he is reading. However, if they are stuck, help them out. If the learner reads these passages with ease, you may want to ask them to read something from the Stage Three.

If the learner makes less than five errors, then the passage is well within the learner's reading level. If learners make more than 5 -7 errors, this material will be within their instructional level. However, they will not be able to read material this complex on their own.

After the learner has read the passage, ask him/her to retell it to you in his/her own words. You can then see how well the learner is reading for comprehension.

WRITING AND SPELLING

You can ask the learner to write a few simple sentences or a short paragraph. Encourage the learner to guess at how words might be spelled but don't be surprised if the learner takes few risks in this situation.

This writing sample should give you an idea about the following:

- How fluent a handwriter is the learner?
- What vocabulary can the learner easily spell?
- What concepts about writing does the learner have?

Assessing the Stage Three Learner

If you suspect your learner is a Stage Three Learner you should use the cards indicated with a C in the upper right hand corner.

READING

Introducing the Reading Cards

The tutor should say to the learner:

> "In order to get an idea of how you read, I would like you to select one of these passages to read out loud. Take your time and look them over if you wish. When you are ready, read the selection out loud. If you need to guess at words, go right ahead."

Let the learner choose one of the C cards.

Observing the Learner Reading

Do not interrupt or correct learners while they are reading. Give encouragement if you feel the learner is asking for it. When the learner is finished reading, ask her to tell you what it was about.

Fluent readers should be able to recall most details. Even if a number of words have been misread, the learner should be able to summarize the passage.

WRITING AND SPELLING

The learner should easily be able to write a paragraph or two about some personal experience, job experience, hobby, interest in education, etc. The learner at this stage should have general ideas about paragraph construction and sentence construction. The learner should be able to use a variety of sentence forms even if punctuation or grammar is not yet accurate.

You should discuss spelling with the learner and encourage her to guess at how words are spelled.

You may wish to dictate a short passage to see what kind of mistakes the learner is making. (See CARDS D for spelling passages.)

APPENDIX A: Determining Readability Levels

Introduction

Teachers can easily find out the reading levels of any text. The following procedure will give a grade level equivalent for any text with 100 words or more.

Fogg's Test of Readability

Procedure

1) Take any sample of 100 words in complete sentences.

2) Count only whole sentences by counting periods. If the last full sentence stops short of the 100th word, count only the full sentences for this stage.

3) Divide the number of sentences into 100: answer = x.

4) Count the number of words with three or more syllables. Omit capitalized words such as names: answer = y.

5. Add the number of words with more than three syllables to your answer, [i.e. x = 5; y = 4; answer: 9].

6) Multiply your answer (x + y) by 0.3 to give a grade equivalent.

7) Example:

   a) Four complete sentences [100 4 = 25]

   b) Nine words with three or more syllables:

   c) 25 + 9 = 34

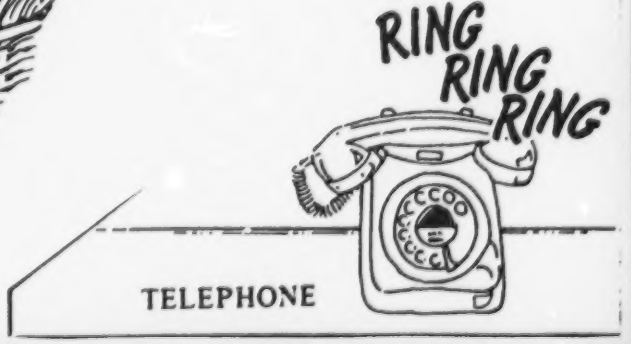
   d) 34 x .3 = 10.2

NOTE: **This readability test gives reading levels that are slightly high, so the material may actually be somewhat easier to read than this test indicates.**

TELEPHONE

Telephone Book

Telephone



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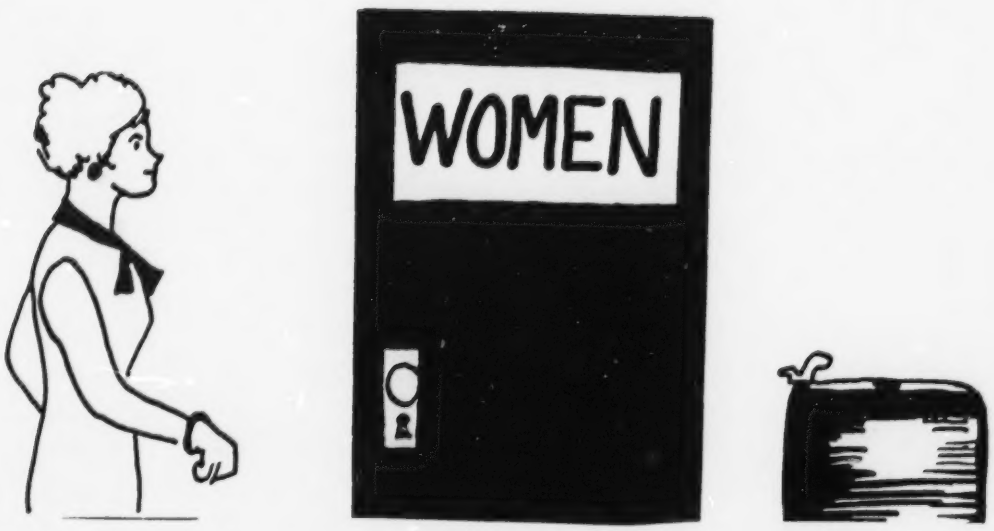

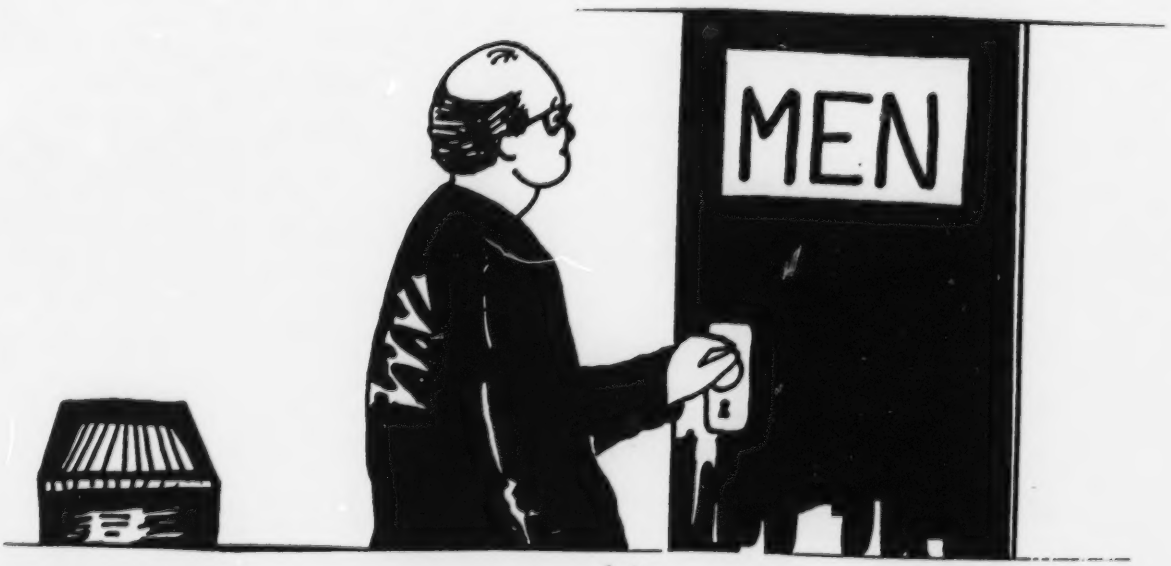

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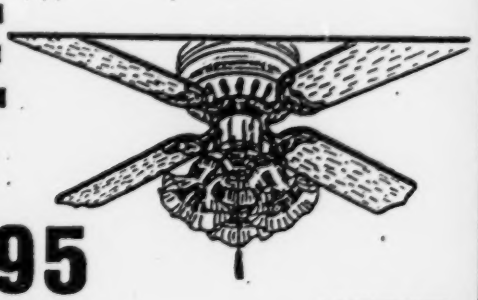

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HARVESTING WILD RICE

August is the time to harvest the wild rice. The Indian people have always harvested wild rice. In the past, they used the 2 stick method to knock the rice into the canoe. Now they use a custom-made harvester to pick more rice.

Wild rice grows in shallow lakes. If the water level is too high, the rice won't grow. If the water level is too low, the rice won't grow. The water level must be just right.

It was raining hard. Water covered the road. The truck moved slowly. Its heavy tires cut a path in the water.

Madge was driving. She never took her eyes off the road.

Len watched the road, too. Two pairs of eyes were better than one. it would be easy to go off the road. Finally Len spoke. "Want me to drive?" he asked.

"No," said Madge. "It's my turn. And besides, you are tired."

"Want the radio?" Len asked.

"Not if you don't," Madge answered.

Madge liked country music. She liked Charley Pride best. But the stations around here didn't play country music.

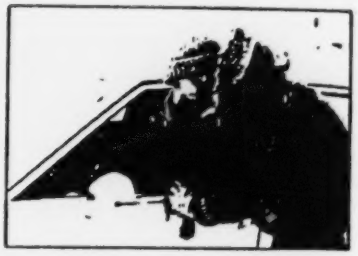
A DEAD BATTERY

Last night the temperature was -34 degrees. When Tim tried to start his car this morning, there was nothing but a sick sounding "rr...rrr...r...rr". Tim forgot to plug in the block heater and now the battery was dead.

Tim has to drive his car to work because there are no buses. Tim need a boost for the battery. Luckily his neighbour, Mary, was just leaving her house for work.

1. "Oh good, here comes my neighbour. I'll ask her to give me a boost."

2. "Hey Mary!"



3. "Morning Mary. Can you give me a hand?"

4. "Sure Tim, what's the problem?

5. "I forgot to plug in my car. I ran the battery down trying to start it. Can you give me a boost?"

6. "No problem Tim. But I don't have any jumper cables."
"That's okay, I do. I just bought them yesterday."

KEEPING MY LANGUAGE ALIVE

I was three years old when I first went to boarding school. I went there speaking and understanding only Cree. While I was in boarding school all the "caregivers" spoke English. But all the students spoke a variety of Native Languages. It was always confused because I never knew what language to speak to anyone. My sisters and brother kept the language alive for me in those early years of my life in boarding school. Punishment was harsh for speaking a Native Language. Often we were ridiculed and were deprived of food, put in solitary confinement and were constantly harassed by the supervisors.

When I was about six my parents kept me at home because I was losing the Cree language. I went to the reserve school and during the winter and spring trapping seasons I went to the trapline with my grandparents. Life was wonderful again because I was loved and respected for who I was. I quickly learned Cree again but I was still able to speak English.

I became the translator for my mom and the older people whenever they had to do business in town: shopping, visiting the doctor or the Indian agent. I felt useful and worthwhile doing this.

From: Ken Dryden. Superpeople Series. 1976. B

More than any other member of the team; Ken Dryden was nervous about the game. He had been picked by coach Harry Sinden to be the goalie. Some of the sports writers and fans suggested that Dryden had played two bad games in a row and that he was not in his top form. What was worse, Ken knew that he had not played well.

What if he was not up for the game? What if he let in a couple of soft goals? This was the most important game of his life. He knew that if other players made mistakes, they could be covered. But no one covered for the goalie; and there could be no excuses. His stomach felt strange; his legs were heavy and tired. And yet he looked forward to the opening face-off.

By the middle of the third period, the score was tied, 5-5. Ken played brilliantly to prevent the Russians from scoring. Finally, with just 34 seconds to go, Paul Henderson scored the winning goal. Canada had won the game and the series by the narrowest of margins. Ken Dryden had risen to the challenge and played one of the greatest games of his life.

From: Voices. by Jill Kristofferson. Fall 1988. C

FIRST JOB

At the age of sixteen and after I had just passed grade ten I decided to get a job for the summer. All dressed up in my best wool suit and good shoes, I was set to take the world on. I asked my mom if she would drive me to Whalley but she shook her head:no. We had very lousy bus services, os it was walking or nothing. I walked all the way to Whalley, about six miles to put in a couple of applications. It was a hot day for June and walking was very difficult. I was getting very tired and frustrated from the heat, walking to much, and from the turn-downs from the employers. The last place I went to was Panco Poultry.

I stood outside the office door for a few minutes to get my nerves together, as I had butterflies in my stomach. I walked to the closest desk and said that I was looking for a job for the summer. A short, half bald man of 50 looked at me with cold blue eyes. He asked me one question which three me off guard. The question was, "Are you right handed?" I said, "Yes."

He then said, "You start Monday morning at 7:30 a.m."

I couldn't believe my ears,. I got a job! My heart skipped a beat as I skipped out the door.

From: Speaking Saskatchewan by Rudy Wiebe C

When the yellow planes came over the school at recess.....he screamed and ran inside to the desk where his sister said he must sit. When he opened his eyes the face of the teacher was there, her gentle face very close, smiling almost up-side-down at him between the iron legs of the desk beneath which he crouched. Her gentle voice.

"Come," she said, "come," and after a moment he scrambled to his feet; he thought she was speaking Low German because he did not yet know that what that word meant was spoken the same in English. Not touching him, she led him between desks to a cupboard against the wall opposite the windows and opened its narrow door. Books. He has never imagined so many books. There may be a million.

She is, of course, speaking to him in English and later, when he remembers that moment again and again, he will never be able to explain how he can understand what she is saying. The open book in her had shows him countless words: words, she tells him, he can now only see the shape of, but he will be able to hear them when he learns to read, and that the word "READ" in English is the same as the word "SPEAK," **raed**, in Low German and through reading all the people of the word will speak to him from books, when he reads he will be able to hear them and he will understand..... He will listen to those voices speaking now for as long as he lives.

From: Angel Square by Brian Doyle C

I didn't really blame Miss Strong for laughing when I said I wanted to be a writer.

After all, I was the second worst writer in the class.

Melody Bleach was the worst writer in the class. Her main problem was she never had a pencil and she couldn't write with a pen and nib because she pressed too hard.

Dad said the reason was, she wasn't organized.

And she always put her tongue out when she tried to write after she borrowed a pencil or the teacher gave her one. She'd stick her tongue between her teeth when she was trying to think of what to write. Some of the kids would laugh at her and make fun of her.

I laughed at her too but I also felt sort of sorry for her.

Specially when she wet herself. That was in grade three, I think. Melody wet herself. She was too scared of Miss Brack of Miss Eck, or whoever it was, to ask if she could leave the room.

So she just sat there and the water ran down off the seat into a pool on the floor under her desk. And the water ran down her cheeks from her eyes. There was water running out of her from both ends.

I think Dad was right. Her main problem was that she wasn't organized. Dad always says, get organized and you can't go wrong.

"Leaving Home Creates Discontent in Families" Universal Press Syndicate. by Erma Bombeck.

The family that played together, prayed together and were raised together now get on each other's nerves. What's the matter with everybody?

A letter from Melissa, a graduating high school senior in Denver, offers an explanation. "My mother returned to working after being a housewife for 17 years. I was unprepared for this shock and didn't take it very well. For 17 years I had someone there to give me aspirin if I was sick, make sure I ate right, and do my laundry. Then, she was gone.

"Lately, we have been having a lot of arguments. I now realize... why we have been arguing. When I was little all I wanted to do was grow up and my mother thought I was growing too fast. Now all I want to be seven years old and have my bicycle back, and my mother is ready for me to grow up."

Melissa said it pretty well.

What we're talking about here is panic. Panic of parents who have just been fired from a job they thought would go on forever and panic from children who thought parents loved them so much they would never abandon them.

Everyone is running around trying to act cool so no one can see how scared they are.

The parents are questioning if they spent enough time with their children, taught them the right things, loved them enough. The kids are wondering if they can make it outside of the cocoon and where they will fit in, and what happens to them if they don't?

Wouldn't it be wonderful if parents could look at their teenagers and say, "I want you to stay, but you can't."

Wouldn't it be wonderful if teenagers could look at their parents and say, "I don't want to leave, but I must."

It's so much better to close the door gently on childhood... than to slam it.

SPELLING DICTATION D

Instructions

The tutor should prepare the learner for the dictation in the following manner:

> "I am going to dictate a short paragraph so that I can get an idea of the kind of spelling attempts you might make with unfamiliar words. You can take as much time as you need and you should guess as best you can at words you don't know how to spell."

Dictation

A peculiar shape was approaching from the southern valley. The machine touched down with precision in the rough mountainous region without even scraping its surface. The children surrounded the pilot who explained that his altimeter and temperature gauge were damaged and he was anxious about increasing altitude in these freezing conditions. From the alpine school he telephoned his base requesting spare instruments to be delivered and fitted immediately.

The children viewed the repairs with enthusiasm, especially when they were taken in groups for an unforgettable flight before the pilot's final departure.

ASSESSING LEARNING LEVELS

Most adult learners have negative experiences of testing and being tested. If at all possible, other ways of assessing reading and writing levels should be used. Some of the following possibilities are:

- Talk to your student. Ask him what he can now read. Ask him what things he would like to be able to read. Ask him what reading activities he might find difficult.

  Example: "What things can you comfortably read? Can you read street signs, newspapers, magazines, books, etc?"

- Ask your student to select some reading materials he is comfortable with. Have him read this aloud to you. If he reads with confidence and few mistakes, you know the kind of reading material he can easily cope with. (Your program should have a range of reading materials available.)

- Ask your student what kinds of things he might find difficult to write. Ask him if he feels he has spelling problems or handwriting difficulties.

  Example: "Would you have trouble writing your name and address? Filling out an application form? Making spelling mistakes in a letter or story?"

- Ask your student to write a short passage about himself. If he has spelling difficulties or problems, ask him to guess at spellings as best he can.

NOTE: If your learner has a mother tongue other than English, this will have implications for his or her literacy learning in English.

With this information, you should be able to identify the general literacy level of your learner and the kinds of literacy tasks he might have difficulty with.

STUDENT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

These questions should only be asked <u>in order to plan a learning program</u>. You should make quite sure that the learner feels comfortable with you and your need to find out more about his learning needs.

<u>Learning Attitudes</u>

1) How do you feel about learning in general? Have you ever taught someone how to do something? What do you think affected their ability to learn?

2) Did you hate/tolerate/avoid school? Do you think you had difficulties in learning to read/write/spell?

3) Did anyone ever try to help you with your reading and writing before? Was it effective? How?

<u>Language Attitudes</u>

For people who speak more than one language:

1) Was the language you spoke at home different from the one spoken in school?

2) Can you read and write in any other languages?

3) How did the school feel about your language? Were you allowed to talk in your own language in school? Were you taught in your own language?

<u>Physical Needs</u>

1) Do you wear glasses? Have you ever had your vision checked?

2) Do you have any hearing problems?

3) Do you need any specific supports (e.g. wheelchair access) in order to participate in the program?

4) Do you know of any physical reasons why you might have any learning difficulties?

<u>Participation</u>

1) How often will you be able to attend?

2) Will you be able to practice outside of the program?

3) Do you have specific learning goals? What are they?

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR LEARNER

As a volunteer tutor, you are now in a new and different role. You are a facilitator in the learning process. You are not expected to be a "teacher" nor an "expert" in reading and writing. You will be participating in a learning program with adults who have many experiences and considerable world knowledge but who do not have as good reading and writing skills as you do.

Nonetheless, as you are undoubtedly aware, these learners may have anxieties about their own abilities, embarrassment at their own level of literacy learning, and a history of negative school experiences which have led them to be quite fragile when first entering a program.

As a volunteer, you need to be sensitive to these realities and slowly get to know your learner. In an initial discussion with a learner, you might exchange information about your families, background, interests, hobbies, etc. Sometimes it is helpful to find out what the learner feels he does well, (e.g. fix cars, make bannock, raise kids, etc.). If your coordinator has not provided you with information about the learning needs and levels of the learner, you may need to determine:

What are the learning goals of the student?

What does s/he want to learn?

How often does the learner plan to attend? How often does the volunteer plan to attend?

What kinds of interests, desires, hobbies does the learner have? What would he like to know more about?

What kind of school experiences did the learner have? Were they positive, negative or non-existent?

LOOK, COVER WRITE, CHECK

LOOK carefully at the word you want to learn. Say it aloud and try to 'picture' it in your mind. Focus especially on the part of the word you want to learn.

COVER the word and say it again.

WRITE the word in your normal handwriting. Say the word as you write it.

CHECK to see if you have got it right. If you have made a mistake, copy the whole word out again.

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PRACTICE the word at least three times in a week.

* Spend about five minutes every other day practicing your words.
* Spread out your practicing: Remember you are getting the word into your long term memory.
* Each time you write the word, try to picture it in your mind. Remember, if you make a mistake, don't just put in the part you got wrong, write the whole word out again.
* Good handwriting can help you learn your spellings.
* At the end of a week, get someone to test you on your words.
* Keep a list of the words you have been working on. Retest yourself on 'old' words occasionally.
* If you find you have forgotten some words, don't worry. You have been trying to learn too many at once. It is better to learn one or two words every week than to fail to learn fifty.

ASSISTED READING

Refer to page 46 of Journeyworkers for more discussion of Assisted Reading.

STEP 1

Discuss what you are going to read with the student. You should determine that this is something s/he wants to read and is interested in.

Make sure you set the scene of the reading selection so that the student will be able to **make predictions.**

STEP 2

Stage One Student (beginner)

Read the selection aloud on your own. Point to the print as you read.

Then, tell the student you are going to read this aloud together. Explain that if s/he doesn't know all the words he can follow you as closely as possible. Again, use your finger as a guide. Do not read in a stilted manner, but take care not to read too quickly. If possible, drop your voice when you think the student either knows a word or is able to predict it.

Note: If the text is a long selection, do the above process paragraph by paragraph.

Stage Two Student (intermediate)

Make sure the text is not one that the student can easily read on his/her own.

You should both read the text aloud together. If the student is unable to make any predictions at unfamiliar words ask him/her to guess. Otherwise, ignore any mistakes and continue reading at a normal pace.

STEP 3

Review and discuss what you have read. Some discussion points might be:

- "Has this ever happened to you?"
- "How was your experience the same? Different?"
- "If you had the author here, what questions would you like to ask?"
- "What did you find difficult or strange about this story/character/ experience/ idea?"
- "Was there any unfamiliar vocabulary or ideas?"

STEPS TO SPELLING

STEP 1

From a piece of writing or language experience story, select with the student between 5 and 10 words to learn that week.

Remember: a) Words will be easier to learn if the student wants to learn them

b) Words will be easier to learn if the invented spelling is close to accurate spelling

STEP 2

Show and explain Look, Cover, Write, Check method. Discuss why this is a good memorizing strategy.

Remember: a) Spelling is a visual-motor activity so visualizing and handwriting are important.

STEP 3

Write the correct spelling in the first column of the practice sheet. Have the student practice in front of you each word on the list. Make sure each step of Look, Cover, Write, Check is done adequately.

STEP 4

Review how to practice; e.g. spreading out practicing, influence on long term memory, etc.

STEP 5

After one week, test the student on his/her spelling words. Any incorrect words should be added to the next week's spelling list.

LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE APPROACH

STEP 1: Discuss the story

The most important aspect of tutoring a student is your personal relationship with him/her. As you get to know one another, you will share interests, common experiences, details about work or home life. Students should be encouraged to utilize their own experience to write a story so that it is easier to read.

Together you and the student can select a topic. Topics can include such things as:

- Returning to school, past school experiences, negative school experiences, etc.
- Work or work-related experiences, aspects of work or specific jobs the student may have had
- Hobbies or special interests; especially 'how to do' something
- Family life or raising children, problems of parenting, experiences with family or children, personal childhood experiences
- Creative stories, legends, myths, stories for children

STEP 2: Taking notes

You now begin the process of writing the story. You take notes, getting down the ideas and sequence of the story. Once you have done this you check back with the learner to verify this is what s/he wishes to write about. Details or items of interest can be selected during this process.

STEP 3: Writing it down

You then ask the student to dictate to you sentence by sentence the story you have outlined. You can both refer to your notes to help you recall the order. You write down the story exactly as it is dictated. (It may even be necessary to invent spellings of colloquial or dialect words.) It is important to use the student's own words and sentence structure even if it is not Standard English.

STEP 4: Checking back, reviewing the story

You then read the story outloud so the student can hear the story in total. Ask the student if any revisions or changes need to be made. Questions that are helpful are:

"Is this the way you wanted it?"

"Do you want to change anything?"

"Do you want to add anything?"

STEP 5: Reading the story together (Assisted reading)

You now read the story outloud **by yourself.** The student follows along while you finger track. After you have read the story alone, you then **both** read the story outloud together.

STEP 6: Further activities

The Language Experience writing can now be used for:

- selecting spelling words to be learned

- developing other stories related to the first one

- skill activites: e.g. visual discrimination, word recognition, developing other sentences from the same words, phonics activities, matching activities, etc.

- copying over for the purposes of: developing handwriting, having a clean copy for the student's file, etc.

LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE WITH STAGE TWO LEARNER

STEP 1: Discuss the Story

The first step in writing, should be a discussion about what you are going to write. This gives the student a focus and demonstrates the need to think about what you are going to write.

Although some students like to write about personal experiences, others may feel more comfortable writing letters, complaints, commentaries, directions (or 'how to do' something), etc.

STEP 2: Take Notes

Having gotten the general gist of the piece of writing, you should now take notes of what exactly the student intends to write. You can help the student organize his/her thoughts, promote sequencing, group ideas, etc. The notes should be in note form not in complete sentences.

STEP 3: Plan your own piece of writing

Go through Step 1 and Step 2 concerning your own piece of writing. You should take notes about your piece of writing and demonstrate to the student what you are doing. By writing at the same time as your student you are modelling how the process works and also reducing a sense of your being a "watcher" and more like a participant in the process of writing.

STEP 4: Both of you write together

Both you and your student should be following your plans and composing sentences to write the piece. You will need to emphasize the necessity for the student to invent spellings. You should explain that inventing spellings is necessary to facilitate fluency in writing (getting things down on paper first and then worrying about spelling).

You may interrupt your writing to help the student in the composing process, but you should encourage students to write on their own at this point. If they get stuck, you can go back and review the notes to help them formulate the next sentence or idea.

STEP 5: Receiving the writing

As soon as you both have finished writing, you and the student should read your writing **aloud** to one another. This emphasizes that first drafts are for the writer's eyes only.

After the student reads the piece aloud, you should ask questions about it. The student should note the questions at the bottom of his piece of writing. In turn, after you have read your piece aloud, the student should make up questions about your piece of writing. You should note them at the bottom of your piece of writing.

STEP 6: Re-drafting your writing

If you have time, both you and the student can re-write your piece for a second time incorporating the new questions as the basis for expansion. Again, after the piece is completed you should ask questions and these should be noted.

STEP 7: Publishing your writing

If the student is satisfied with the second draft, you can correct the spellings so that a good copy (i.e. free of errors) can be made public. Students should be encouraged to 'publish' their writing in the following ways:

- through submission to a program newspaper
- through public display in classrooms
- through sharing writing with other students
- through sending letters to public officials, friends, family, etc.